



HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION

**April 30, 2014 at 4:30 pm
Council Chambers**

COMMISSIONERS PRESENT

Gil Palmer, Chairperson
Trena Carter, Treasurer
John Roberts, Secretary
Annette Barnes
Greg Lewis
Rhea Baker-Ipek
Kelly Benjamin
John Stroh

COMMISSIONERS ABSENT

Ian Kohen, Vice Chairperson
Tony McClendon
Richard Gold

STAFF PRESENT

Lorraine Smith, Director
Aida Ramirez, Deputy Director
Betsy Schuette, Admin. Assist.

MEETING CALLED TO ORDER

GUESTS PRESENT

Tim Shuffett, City Council Liaison
Jeff Logston, City Attorney

SECRETARY'S REPORT

Commissioner Carter moved that the March minutes be approved as presented. Commissioner Barnes seconded. Motion carried. March minutes were approved.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Commissioner Carter reported the previous balance of the Donations Account as \$6125.74. Ticket revenue is \$10,320.00 and expenses were \$11,346.50 with a new balance of \$5,099.24. The outstanding balance of ticket revenue is \$2,010.00 which would bring the final balance to \$7,109.24.

CHAIRPERSON'S REPORT

No Report.

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

CASEWORK:

Director Smith reported that for the month of April in the midst of the Annual Dinner meeting planning the office continued to be busy with intakes and filings. She highlighted and commended the work that Deputy Director Ramirez did on a national origin in housing filing with ICRC. Director Smith commended Deputy Director Ramirez's excellent work she did on that case. The office is also working on the disposition of a number of other cases in the office and will report more next month.

COMMISSION:

2014 Annual Dinner:

Director Smith expressed appreciation to the Commissioners for all their help at the Annual Dinner. She thanked Human Rights staff Betsy and Aida for all their hard work as well. Director Smith reported receiving many positive comments from the community to which Director Smith expressed appreciation to the community for their support of the Human Rights Commission.

Deputy Director Ramirez reported the data she had compiled from the evaluations completed at the Annual Dinner.

- 90 respondents completed evaluations.
- 50.6 years old-the average age of the respondents.
- 41 yes-respondents said yes to cash bar
- 35 no-respondents said no to cash bar
- 14 blank-respondents did not indicate either yes or no
- 47.6 years old, Yes-respondents average age who answered yes to having a cash bar
- 58.6 years old, No-respondents average age who answered no to having a cash bar

The questions were arranged in a Likert Style system, strongly agree to strongly disagree. Deputy Director Ramirez numbered strongly agree as 5 down to strongly disagree being 1 and then averaged their scoring. The results scored above average positively on all the questions. Director Smith suggests this data be used to improve on future annual dinners.

Director Smith reported that she plans to follow up with Cummins, Inc. regarding the video they took of the Annual Dinner. She also informed the Commissioners that the thank you notes had already been sent out to all the supporters of the Annual Dinner.

Director Smith reported to the Commissioners that the Annual Dinner had received quite a bit of unexpected press coverage in The Republic which she feels helped boost the community awareness of the dinner as well as saving the Commission money by not needing to advertise.

CHRC Directorship Transition:

Director Smith reported that she and Deputy Director Ramirez are meeting to work on closing the loop on office details. The office has a Standard Operating Procedures Manual which has been called the Secretaries Manual in the past. Director Smith will be making sure that's updated and will be working with Administrative Assistant Betsy to update the sections she has more information on in terms of the budget and other office functions. Director Smith and Deputy Director Ramirez are meeting weekly to cover everything and make sure all the processes are in place.

Deputy Director Sourcing:

Director Smith reported that Deputy Director Ramirez will be assuming the Director's position as of July 1st and will need to have the Deputy Director's position filled. Several applications have come through and interviews should be taking place in the next couple of weeks.

Director Smith's last day:

Director Smith reported that her last day in the office would be June 11th but not off the payroll until July 1st at which time Deputy Director Ramirez will take over the position as Director on that date.

OFFICE:

- Deputy Director Ramirez has received a lot of on the job training with case work.
- April 15th -Deputy Director Ramirez attended the Heritage Fund Non Profit Board Development Workshop at the Donner Center.
- April 17th –Deputy Director Ramirez attended the Fair Housing Center of Central Indiana Conference.
- The Fair Housing on-site monitoring visit scheduled April 28th-29th was cancelled by Beverly Noble the Equal Opportunity Specialist with HUD. The City of Columbus receives federal funding and has to have this annual visit to continue receiving funding.
- Director Smith and Deputy Director Ramirez attended the Mayor's State of the City address on April 15th and it was well attended by city department heads, employees and community members.
- Deputy Director Ramirez also attended the Leadership Bartholomew County meeting with a planner to arrange for Deputy Director Ramirez to provide a presentation on changing diversity demographics.
- Director Smith and Ric King, Chair of the Audit and Review Committee met with a potential candidate to fill a vacancy on the committee. Mr. King will be sending the candidate's information to the Mayor.
- Director Smith and Tracy Souza met with Mayor Brown to reconvene the Welcoming Community Coalition with hopes to getting that restarted.
- Dr. Boesak's speaking event will be Saturday, May 3rd at North Christian Church. Director Smith has been attending a number of the planning meetings.
- Director Smith and Commissioner Barnes will be attending a luncheon along with several other representatives of the cosponsors to meet with Dr. Boesak.
- Director Smith will be serving as a judge for the East High School Senior Projects on May 21st and 22nd.

OTHER ACTIVITIES:

MACDA (Mayor's Advisory Council on Disability and Accessibility):

Director Smith reported that MACDA's Sidewalk Committee is working on the direction of the committee as well as the Adopt a Sidewalk proposal.

Heritage Fund Outreach Committee:

Director Smith reported that the Welcoming Community II Grants program selection has been finalized and will be announced soon.

Women's Rights Project Collaboration:

Director Smith and Deputy Director Ramirez met with Whitney Ulm who is a local advocate and instrumental in bringing the movie "Tricked" to Columbus. Ms. Ulm would like to work with the Commission to collaborate on Women's Rights issue projects in the future. Director Smith has invited Ms. Ulm to possibly present to the Commission about her work on Women's Rights.

CITY HALL:

Director Smith reported that Chief Jason Maddix announced his retirement. Director Smith commended Chief Maddix on all of his work with the Commission. Director Smith commended his outstanding work to maintain awareness of diversity and inclusion in law enforcement, as well as his openness to contact the Commission to talk through issues of diversity and inclusion which has prevented situations from becoming explosive.

UPCOMING:

Saturday, May 3rd at 4:00pm: Dr. Boesak's speaking event for the William R. Laws Peacemaking Lecture at North Christian Church.

June 17th-20th: Indiana Consortium of State and Local Human Rights Agencies/NAHRW (National Association of Human Rights Workers) will be holding their annual conference in Merrillville, Indiana.

DISCUSSION

2014 Annual Dinner Debriefing:

Director Smith wanted to discuss the outcome with the Commissioners. Director Smith felt establishing an Annual Dinner Committee now will help to get an early jump on the planning and improvement of the 2015 Annual Dinner. Discussion ensued.

Fair Housing Conference/Other Training:

Deputy Director Ramirez reported about the Heritage Fund Board Engagement Workshop that she and Commissioner Stroh attended on April 15th. Dave Sternberg, founding partner of Loring, Sternberg & Associates presented the workshop. Mr. Sternberg's presentation included topics on how to examine the structures of Boards and Commissions, how to recruit effective Board members/Commissioners and how to make the best out of those individuals who do committee work and represent the organizations. Deputy Director found this very useful as well as a great opportunity to network.

Deputy Director Ramirez also attended the Fair Housing 2nd Annual Conference on April 17th. The keynote was Carlotta Walls LaNier one of the "Little Rock Nine". There were several workshops Deputy Director attended during the 2 days. Discussion ensued.

FOR ACTION

2015 Annual Dinner Committee Selection:

Commissioners discussed developing an Annual Dinner subcommittee to start planning early for the 2015 Annual Dinner. **Commissioner Stroh moved to accept Commissioners Barnes, Benjamin, Baker-Ipek, Kohen and Gold as the members of the 2015 Annual Dinner, contingent on Commissioners Kohen and Gold agreeing to volunteer. Commissioner Lewis seconded. Motion carried.**

Diversity Training Proposal/Exploratory Committee:

Tabled action item until May Commission meeting

LIAISON REPORTS

Prior to Liaison Reports Chairperson Palmer asked City Council Liaison Shuffett if he had any suggestions or observations. Liaison Shuffett expressed positive feedback on the Commission overall as well as how well the Commissioners work together. Liaison Shuffett stated that during the paid staff transition if there is anything the City Council can do to help to let him know. His goal is to communicate openly between the City Councilmembers and the Commission.

- Commissioner Baker-Ipek reported that the Interfaith Forum is continuing the Shoulder to Shoulder gatherings and just had their 2nd such gatherings. Commissioner Baker-Ipek also reported that there will be Interfaith Forum members present at the luncheon for Dr. Boesak.
- Commissioner Lewis-no report. Director Smith notified the Commissioners that the CAMEO Annual Meeting is coming up in May at the Learning Center. She will get more information and send it to the Commissioners.
- Commissioner Stroh reported that the Inclusive Community Coalition is working with First United Methodist Church on Sunday mornings viewing the “Threads of Diversity” video followed by question/discussion.
- Commissioner Roberts reported that the Transit Advisory board meeting was rescheduled and will meet again on May 2nd at 2:00pm. Also, the final Transit Study is out and if any of the Commissioners would like a copy of it, Commissioner Roberts can forward that on and will also be forwarded to the office as well.
- Commissioner Barnes reported meeting with Pride Alliance at their meeting April 24th and they are very active and participating in many events. Pride Alliance had expressed how pleased they were with the Human Rights Annual Dinner as well as the Keynote Speaker, Tom Linebarger.
- Commissioner Roberts added that he had spoken to Marcus Hurley, who was influential in bringing the Big 10 Rugby Tournament, and the feedback from all of the colleges participating in the tournament was extremely positive about this community. Some had never heard of Columbus but felt so welcomed that they would return.
- Commissioner Baker-Ipek expressed how pleased she was with the turnout of the Annual Dinner and how proud she is to be a part of the Commission. Discussion ensued.

ADJOURNMENT:

Commissioner Carter moved for adjournment, seconded by Commissioner Roberts. Motion carried meeting adjourned.